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ABSTRACT

The paper reports on a practicum project to assess the training needs of paraprofessionals and to develop a training program to meet those needs. The first section of the paper is a literature review, which revealed few studies that have addressed the efficacy of paraprofessinals, though research that has been done indicates that paraprofessionals working with handicapped children have a direct effect on the students' academic performance. The literature also reveals that few states systematically train or certify paraprofessionals, and few universities teach preservice teachers how to utilize paraprofessionals in the classroom. The training program was designed to help improve the knowledge of disabilities, working relationships, and job performance skills of a target group of 12 special education paraprofessionals who work with K-2 students with handicaps in a rural Maine island school. Twenty-five skills were identified as those a paraprofessional should possess for job success; a needs assessment survey was administered to participants. Overall, entry skills and knowledge of the target group assessed ranged from 20 percent to 60 percent level of proficiency, well below the 80 percent or above level of proficiency preferred in the literature and among professionals surveyed for the study. The objectives for the program were for the paraprofessionals to increase their knowledge of disabilities, working relationships, and job performance skills by a program objective of 80 percent. The target group participated in a 12-week training session developed from a needs analysis assessment. Each of the weekly work sessions is described in the report. Project evaluations and assessments indicated that all program objectives were met, with the target group improving dramatically in all areas. Recommendations for staff development budget and expenditures, plus topics to be covered are outlined. Ten appendices provide: Maine Department of Education Special Education Regulations; Needs Assessment; Summary of Needs Assessment; Pretest for Paraprofessionals; Posttest for Paraprofessionals; Results of Pre-Assessment for Paraprofessionals; Summary of Results of Pre/Post Evaluations; Pre/Post Professional Evaluation of Paraprofessionals; Paraprofessional Training Evaluation; and Paraprofessional Certificate of Participation. (Contains 40 references.) (ND)

ED 386 430

A TRAINING PROGRAM DESIGNED TO DEVELOP KNOWLEDGEABLE PARAPROFESSIONALS WITH IMPROVED JOB PERFORMANCE SKILLS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF TEACHERS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

by

Julie H. Davis

A Final Report submitted to the Faculty of the
Fischler Center for the Advancement of Education
of Nova Southeastern University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in the
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Abstract

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To Increase Disabilities Knowledge, Working Relationships, and Job Performance Skills of Special Education Paraprofessionals.

This program was developed and implemented to help improve the knowledge of disabilities, working relationships, and job performance skills of a target group of 12 special education paraprofessionals who work with K-2 students with handicaps in a rural island school. The objectives for the program were for the paraprofessionals to increase their knowledge of disabilities, working relationships, and job performance skills by a program objective of 80%. The target group was requested to participate in a 12-week training session developed from a needs analysis assessment. Program objectives were measured by a pre/post self evaluation and pre/post assessment by the supervising teachers and director of special services.

All the program objectives were met, with the target group improving dramatically in all areas. Appendices include all data collection instruments and analyses of the data collected.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other professionals in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

_____

Julie H. Davis

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Julie H. Davis

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CHAPTER I.

Purpose

Background

The setting for this training project was on a rural island in Maine, connected to the mainland by a suspension bridge built in 1943 and a man-made causeway. It is approximately six hours downeast of Boston. This island community was first settled in 1762, originally encompassing two smaller islands which spilt off in 1874 and 1897 respectively.

The socioeconomic status of the island is widely diverse. Most native families derive their livelihood from the fishing and service industries. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, the native population of this rural island is 3,144, but population increases by at least one-third in the summer since the island has recently begun to promote tourism. Other seasonal work includes boat chartering, blueberry harvesting, pink granite quarrying, and wreath making. The island has become a quiet haven for those desiring to escape the pace of city life. Many writers, artists, musicians, and wealthy entrepreneurs have built homes on the island.

The island's road system consists of one complete loop around with three crossroads. All other roads are either dead-ends to the ocean or circle

back to the main loop. The buses that daily transport the island students travel many shore roads, with the average bus ride to school being one hour. The schools on the major loop road are four, eight, and fifteen miles apart.

The Community School District (CSD) serves the two major towns and six villages on the island. There are three school buildings: the junior-senior high, the K-2 elementary, and the three-six elementary. Due to high enrollments and space constraints, one third grade has been moved to the K-2 building. The overall school population in Grades K-12 is 528, ranging in age from five to 18 years.

The specific site for this project was the smaller, 10,000 sq. ft. K-2 elementary building located in the upper northeastern corner of the island. Built in 1946, the K-2 elementary building has six classrooms, a library, a speech therapy room, separate boys' and girls' rest rooms, one adult rest room, and a small central office space that accommodates the principal, a secretary, and a photocopier. There is an all-purpose room and a kitchen, which has been dismantled, since food is now served by satellite from the high school. Two converted closets house Chapter I services and the guidance counselor. The building also has two attics and one furnace room, but no cellar. The building has a flat roof. In addition, the CSD rents three portable classrooms to accommodate student enrollment at this site, and specifically one third grade. The K-2 building, itself, is in serious need of repair. Its

replacement, a new elementary island school, is on a state list for funding as Project #16, but the state only funds one to three projects per year.

The K-3 elementary school has 46 kindergarten students, 32 first graders, 54 second graders, and 18 third graders. Another 36 third graders are in the three to six building that is eight miles away. The faculty and staff at the K-2 building consists of eight classroom teachers, two half-time Chapter I teachers, a 10-hour home school kindergarten Chapter I coordinator, an itinerant speech therapist who is shared between two towns, two special education teachers, and music, art, and physical education teachers. There is a half-time guidance counselor and a one-fifth contracted counselor for special education students. Administration includes a principal who divides her time between the two elementary buildings eight miles apart and a two-fifths assistant principal. Non-instructional staff includes six paraprofessionals for special needs students, one janitor, one food server, and a one-fifth school nurse.

There are two classrooms at the site designated for special needs programming. One room houses the Regional Program (see 5.7 Maine Regulations, Appendix A, p. 47) which currently serves five students. The other room (this writer's) houses the Composite Program (see 5.5 Maine Regulations, Appendix A, p. 47), which can serve up to 15 varying exceptionality students. Students in both programs are also assigned to a

regular homeroom for social and academic mainstreaming. However, the K-2 elementary school has not adopted full inclusion, and mainstreaming is not determined systematically. Students with special needs are mainstreamed when and where success from adequate accommodations and implementation of instruction seems likely. The handicapping conditions of the K-3 students with special needs include severely non-verbal, medically challenged, profound cerebral palsy, Downs Syndrome, Landeau Kleffner Syndrome (Autism-like), tuber sclerosis, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder, mental retardation, learning disabilities, dyslexia, multihandicapped, and speech and language disordered.

The writer of this practicum is currently certified in Elementary Education and Learning Disabilities; has held the position of composite special education teacher for nine years; holds a B.A. in Child Psychology from Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts; and will receive a Master of Science degree in Varying Exceptionalities from Nova Southeastern University upon completion and acceptance of this project. The writer will in the near future, also become a Certified Special Education Consultant in the State of Maine. For six years, the writer has represented the County as an advisory team member of the Maine State Rural Network for Special Educators.

As special education teacher in the composite program, this writer works cooperatively with one other teacher to meet the needs of 20 special needs

students. They consult, share, and teach each other's caseloads when necessary. The primary responsibility of both special education teachers is to deliver services according to the Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed for each student in accord with Federal and State regulations. The special education teachers also supervise the paraprofessionals assigned to special needs students, develop the paraprofessional schedules, and oversee mainstreaming practices. The writer has recently been given the responsibility to design and provide training for the paraprofessionals.

The role of paraprofessionals is ever-changing to meet the needs of the particular student the paraprofessional is working with. One of the five full-time and one half-time paraprofessional at the site were assigned to work directly with students in the Composite Program classroom. The remaining paraprofessionals were assigned to the Regional Program and Composite Program students who need 1:1 assistance when in the mainstreamed classrooms.

The roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessionals also changed, depending on whether the paraprofessionals were working in the mainstreamed classroom, the composite classroom, or the regional classroom. In the mainstreamed classroom, the paraprofessionals were expected to carry out modifications outlined by the regular and the special education teachers. There, the paraprofessional's role was to assist the student with special needs

in the least restrictive environment so that the student could participate as fully as possible with her/his classmates. When the paraprofessionals worked with a special needs student in the regional or composite classrooms, it was expected that the paraprofessional would apply more intensified strategies supervised by the special education teacher, which facilitated the educational progress of the students and ultimately improved their skills. Further, improvement of those skills was demonstrated by the students by generalizing and transferring those skills within the mainstreamed classroom with paraprofessional assistance.

The position of composite teacher further required the writer to chair pupil evaluation team (PET) meetings, to serve as a member of the newly developed Child Assistance Team (CAT), and to participate in kindergarten screening and Child Find activities. The writer acted as a liaison between Island preschools and the public school, conducted student evaluations, and coordinated schedules of contracted consultants. Parents and community volunteers met with the writer on a daily basis in an effort to integrate parents, community, and the school for the educational betterment of all island children. The writer was also responsible for designing and providing training for the paraprofessionals. Additionally, the writer, as a team member, was responsible for annual evaluation of the paraprofessionals' job performance.

During the 1993-94 school year, this writer was granted a sabbatical to work on a master's program at Nova Southeastern University. A replacement

was hired to serve the composite classroom, working in conjunction with the experienced teacher of the Regional Program. The composite room had 10 students assigned to it, with one paraprofessional. The Regional had four students assigned to it with three paraprofessionals. Two of these paraprofessionals had experience working in the programs and two had been newly hired one year before. The incoming kindergarten class of 58 students had seven students with extreme needs. One full-time and one half-time additional paraprofessionals were hired to work with the combined caseload of 21 students.

In the writer's absence, disorganization reigned. Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) meetings were not completed on their yearly annual review cycle. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) were either not written or were implemented haphazardly. Parents became angry and frustrated. Paraprofessionals lacked preparedness and were either over-supervised (told by all what to do) or unsupervised (told nothing). Though mainstreaming took place on a daily basis, paraprofessionals were given little or no preparation or support in carrying out their duties and were never advised of their exact responsibilities. No substitutes were hired, and there was no staff development program. When paraprofessionals were left on their own, behavioral difficulties arose with the students. These behavioral concerns were left unaddressed, adding to

the chaos and stress throughout the mainstreaming classrooms and special education classrooms.

Problem Statement

During the past three years, paraprofessionals had expressed concern over the lack of education and training they believed they needed to work with students with special needs at the K-3 elementary island school in Maine. Failure to provide adequate educational training for paraprofessionals had resulted in marginal job performance and high turnover. Scheduling problems had caused high stress and absenteeism. Minimal release time and minimal financial resources had been provided to assist paraprofessionals in preparing for their changing roles and responsibilities in the special education practices of the 90s. Long-range educational planning for optimal use of paraprofessionals in the mainstreamed classroom had not taken priority. As the island school restructured toward a more inclusive environment, administrators (also subject to a high turnover rate) were unclear as to the training needs. This writer had been charged with the responsibility to review the mainstreaming plan, to write clear descriptions of the paraprofessional roles and responsibilities, and to develop a training program to meet the needs of the paraprofessionals who work with special needs students.

It was the goal of this practicum to assess the training needs of paraprofessionals working in both the regional and composite programs and to design and deliver a training program to meet those needs. A needs assessment (Appendix B, p. 51) was conducted to determine felt needs of the paraprofessionals currently employed. A needs assessment was developed based on the literature and skills identified by the director of special service and supervisory teachers. Twenty-five skills were identified as those a paraprofessional should possess for job success. The needs assessment was administered to 12 paraprofessionals, six then employed in the program, plus six individuals who had agreed to participate in training in order to continue as substitute paraprofessionals.

Results of the needs assessment (Appendix C, p. 53) indicated that all respondents believed the identified skills were needed. Items 21-25, which targeted classroom organization, appeared to be regarded as less important needs, perhaps because the paraprofessionals had prior knowledge of those skills due to their previous volunteer work at the school.

Based upon the results of the needs assessment, a program was developed to provide 12 weeks of paraprofessional training. The program emphasis was on the skills of Behavior Management Support, Instructional Support, Working Relationships, Understanding Students with Handicaps, and Classroom Organization. This program was administered to the target group.

Target Group

The target group for this study was six paraprofessionals then employed in the program, plus six individuals who had agreed to participate in training in order to continue as substitute paraprofessionals. This group included six female employed paraprofessionals and six female community members employed as substitute paraprofessionals. They ranged from 23 to 66 years in age. They had been employed on an average from one to 18 years. Two had four-year college degrees in art and social psychology; the remaining ten ranged from having one year of college plus attendance at workshops to a high school diploma with no training. These paraprofessionals were compensated according to the support staff contract which ranged from $5.25 to $7.55 per hour. The one-half hour lunch break was not included in their compensation. The paraprofessionals worked between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. They were currently classified as "care aides," "instructional aides," "paraprofessionals," or "educational technicians I, II, III." These random, loosely-defined titles only added to the confusion of roles and responsibilities, and negative competition between paraprofessionals. The writer chose to ignore such distinctions because, for the most part, the terms were used interchangeably in the district.

A pre-assessment (Appendix D, p. 55) based on the needs assessment/training program skills was administered to the target group.

Results of the pre-assessment (Appendix F, p. 58) indicated that six members of the target group estimated their level of needed skills and knowledge to be at a median level of 60% or above. Four members estimated their entry level skills as a median of 40%, and two members reported a 20% entry level of knowledge, working relationships, and job performance skills.

Overall, entry skills and knowledge of the target group assessed ranged from a 20% to 60% level of proficiency. The literature and professionals interviewed generally agreed that 80% or above level of proficiency was preferred to successfully conduct the tasks required by a paraprofessional in special/regular education classrooms. This indicates a 60%-20% discrepancy level from the preferred 80% goal.

Further analysis of pre-assessment data (Appendix F, p. 58) revealed that members of the target group felt their areas of greatest need were in the areas of behavior management, understanding students with handicaps, and legal knowledge. They felt more comfortable with the areas of instruction, working relationships, and classroom organization. In addition to self-evaluation, paraprofessionals' entry level skills and knowledge were assessed by the professionals in whose classrooms they worked (Appendix G, p. 62). The supervising teachers and Director of Special Services met and rated whether the performance of each member of the target group met the desired 80% level of performance. It was found that in the area of behavior and

understanding students with handicaps and laws, the members of the target group achieved a median score of 40%. In the areas of Instruction, Working Relationships, and Classroom Organization, the members achieved a median score of 60%.

Outcome Objectives

The proposed objectives were:

After participating in a 12-week cooperative educational training project, members of the target group will increase their level of knowledge and skills to the 80 percent or above level as shown by a post-assessment self-evaluation (Appendix E, p. 57).

After participating in a 12-week cooperative educational training project, members of the target group will increase their level of knowledge and skills to the 80 percent or above level as shown by post-assessment ratings by supervising teachers/director (Appendix G, p. 62).

CHAPTER II.

Research and Planned Solution Strategy

Training can serve an important role within any organization, even if individuals to be trained have extensive prior education, or prior work experience. According to Nadler (1986, p. 14), training is defined as learning related to the present job. It narrows the gaps between what individuals know or can do and what they should know and do. Caution is needed in preparing a paraprofessional training program so that the training given is not intended to be so narrowly defined as to involve only learning related to job performance, but to be educational training which is concerned with the total human being.

A cooperative educational training model for this project was defined as a program supported financially by the administrators (by purchasing materials and paying paraprofessionals hourly wages for attending workshops after school hours) that, if successful, may become part of the school policy. Since emphasis was placed on measurable improvements in job performance and cooperative attitudes, internal validity was maintained. Training improved job performance by empowering individual abilities, stimulating motivation, and matching individual abilities to activity requirements.

Quality delivery of appropriate educational services to all children with disabilities is the prime objective of special education. Quality is not simply achieved by increasing the numbers of persons involved in providing educational services. It demands critical attention toward the kind of training given to personnel at all levels. Professional accountability, PL94-142, PL101-476, and consumer advocacy groups have prompted a closer examination of the type of training received by special education personnel.

Utilization of paraprofessionals in educational settings began in the 1950s when, during a severe teacher shortage, school boards and local administrators saw paraprofessionals as one means to continue to provide education to all students (Pickett, 1986). The dramatic increase in paraprofessionals in classrooms came during the late 1960s and 1970s where both the "War on Poverty" and early special education programs were initiated (Lindsey, 1983; Pickett, 1986a). Although fewer than 10,000 paraprofessionals were employed in the public schools nationally in 1965, there were over 150,000 in 1986, and the number is still rising in the 90s. Further, with the continuing severe teacher shortages in special education, there will be continued pressure to increase the number of paraprofessionals. In addition, the increase in students receiving services during the last three decades will only add to this continued growth in the utilization of paraprofessionals.

While historically, examination has been used primarily in the training of certified special education teachers (Burke, 1976), currently an increasing amount of attention has focused on the training and utilization of paraprofessionals in the service delivery to the handicapped. The increased growth in the utilization of paraprofessionals represents an important service delivery change in the education of students with handicaps, and the unaddressed efficacy questions surrounding it (Fafard, 1977).

Several factors have influenced paraprofessional training: (a) the changing role of the certified teachers in special education, (b) the wide use of paraprofessionals in schools restructuring toward inclusion, (c) federal/state support and recognition of paraprofessionals, and (d) the increasing amount of training paraprofessionals are receiving through state/community colleges, workshops, and inservice programs.

The roles and responsibilities that paraprofessionals have taken in programs for children with handicaps have evolved from simply performing non-teaching duties to more direct interaction in instructional delivery. The mid-seventies role specification for paraprofessionals was based on a competency framework (Reid & Reid, 1974; Tucker et al., 1976; Tucker & Horner, 1977). The emphasis was on identifying skills that are necessary to work effectively with children with handicaps regardless of professional status. For the most efficient delivery of educational services, Tucker and colleagues

indicated that both the paraprofessional and the professional must possess skills that are directly related to changing behavior of students with handicaps. The prime focus of paraprofessional utilization is on providing direct instructional services. However, for paraprofessionals to be utilized effectively, a training process must be developed to match the overall goal of the specific special education program (Case, 1986; Pickett, 1986a, 1986b). Training periods have varied in length, from two weeks to a 48-week training period, depending on whether a degree is sought (Reid & Reid, 1974).

Investigation was conducted by Frank, Keith, & Steil (1988) to identify those tasks which special education teachers rate as important for their paraprofessionals to be able to complete. The survey of 254 teacher-paraprofessional pairs suggested that, by comparing the expectations of teachers with actual training received by paraprofessionals, trainers could determine whether their programs were adequately preparing paraprofessionals. Only two tasks were rated as important by every group of special education teachers, (a) more needed inservice training for paraprofessionals, (b) more inservice training for paraprofessionals in the area of behavior management. For the remaining tasks, different patterns of importance ratings were found, depending on the type of instructional model in which teachers taught and the age of students served. The findings by Frank

et al suggest that paraprofessionals need to have differing competencies, depending on the type of educational setting in which they are employed.

Although training is recommended by most professionals in the field, the practice of hiring paraprofessionals without providing training exists in most states (Frith & Lindsey, 1982; Picket, 1986a). Frith & Lindsey (1982) surveyed 50 state education agencies to determine certification, training, and programming provided for special education paraprofessionals. Eighty-six percent of the representatives who completed the survey indicated that their state had no certification requirements for paraprofessionals, and 40 percent of those respondents thought that some certification standards would be desirable. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents indicated training was the responsibility of local education agencies. Although 72 percent reported training programs did not require state department approval, 71 percent of the respondents indicated such approval would improve the quality of training. Pickett (1986b) also surveyed 57 state special education directors, in addition to territorial directors of special education, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the District of Columbia. Data collected from the 52 respondents were compared to data from two previous surveys from 1973 and 1979. The surveys, conducted by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education, demonstrated that nine states offered certification for paraprofessionals in 1973, and only three additional states offered it in 1986.

Training Models

Training programs provided by colleges combine both theoretical coursework and practical experience with a variety of handicapped children. The CASE program described by Reid and Reid (1974) is a model of this kind of training. However, the majority of training described in the literature has been short-term inservice training in specific skill areas of delivery (Faford, 1977). Field-based Inservice (Evans, 1978) a project in Austin Texas, addressed the need for training paraprofessionals who were currently working with young handicapped children in rural and urban areas of Texas. Alternatives for Paraprofessional Training (APT) provided on-site competency-based training for paraprofessionals through a variety of alternatives matched to system-specific needs. In addition, complementary training was provided for the supervising teacher to facilitate effective utilization of APT trained paraprofessionals. In 1980, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) conducted a two-part study to address the concerns of the utilization of paraprofessionals. The results of the study went into the development of a field-based inservice training program for Nebraska state paraprofessionals.

Much of the literature on paraprofessionals in special education relates to training models (Jones & Bender, 1993). Although these models were not founded on empirical research, several commonalities can be identified among the suggested models.

Job descriptions have not been clearly articulated to reflect the expanded role of the paraprofessional (Frank et al., 1988; Pickett, 1986a). Since job descriptions are not generic for all paraprofessionals, consideration should be given by the professional developing the training program in terms of exceptionalities of the children and tasks to be performed by the paraprofessional in the regional, resource, composite, and self-contained vs. mainstream programs.

Numerous authors have indicated some training should be required prior to beginning work (Frith & Lindsay, 1982, Frith & Mims, 1985). Frith & Mims (1985) cited inadequate preservice training as one of the major reasons that paraprofessionals in special education did not stay on the job. In addition to adequate initial training, follow-up training at regular intervals was recommended. Several authors encouraged a team approach to training, by training paraprofessionals and teachers simultaneously (Frith & Mims, 1985; Miramontes, 1990).

Frith & Mims (1985) prepared a literature review on the subject of burnout among special education paraprofessionals. They suggested that the primary cause of burnout among paraprofessionals is stress (Bayerl & MacKenzie, 1981; Moracco & McFadden, 1981) as a result of stagnation in their job, lack of career advancement, inadequate training, undefined role descriptions, and misconceptions about the roles of others. They, along with

others (Boomer, 1980, 1982; Frank et al., 1988; Frith & Lindsey, 1982; Wood, Coombs & Walters, 1986) have offered recommendations and implications for staff development training for paraprofessionals working in special education programs to alleviate conditions that cause burnout.

Recognizing symptoms of burnout and learning to cope with them appropriately provide the basis for important staff development activities. This training can be aimed at groups of paraprofessionals or at teacher-paraprofessional teams. Staff development workshops related to burnout should be repeated at least annually. One reason is that burnout symptoms often develop suddenly. Another reason is that new paraprofessionals are hired. Thirdly, new strategies for coping with burnout may become available. (Frith & Mims, 1985).

Staff Development for Paraprofessionals of the 90s

Power (1992) reported that the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda School District in New York has established the Kenmore Staff Development Center to serve the district's educators. The center offers teachers and paraprofessional staff a choice of more than 100 courses ranging from two-hour workshops to five three-hour sessions. Popular courses offer skills in coping with co-workers, public speaking, behavior management in the

classroom, and balancing work and family. Each course is evaluated with each participant rating its quality.

When it comes to professional development, education support personnel are moving into the driver's seat as reported by Theresa Johnston (1994) of Pattonville, Missouri. When Pattonville Support-NEA (PSNEA) organized three years ago, district administrators asked the new association to manage professional development for its members. The district provided $5,000 to cover the costs of bringing in speakers and left the choice of those speakers up to the local association. Support personnel have become empowered to manage their own professional development. Outcomes have been reported as positive with full attendance. Education support employees in Palos Hills, Illinois, also earned the right to control their own professional development activities. Barbara Hart (1994), president of the District 230 Classified Personnel Association, convinced the administration that support workers should plan their own activities. House Bill #1209 provided a big boost in staff development money for school employees across the State of Washington as reported by Tom Kammerzell (1994). It requires that education support personnel, along with teachers, be included in staff development planning. Forty million dollars for 1994-95 school year were designated for planning and carrying out staff development within the State of Washington.

Support staff make up nearly 10 percent of the National Education Association. Ann Bastian (1992), Policy Officer of the New World Foundation, advises support workers to be assertive and participate in efforts to improve education.

A unique program (NEA Today, September 1992) helps paraprofessionals become teachers. A new program in Nevada helps minority teacher assistants become certified teachers. The state allocates funds to help paraprofessionals pay for the college education necessary for teaching certification.

According to the article "Facing high speed collision, Board does a 180" (NEA Today, September 1992), the Blue Mountain Union School Board plans to lay off 13 staff paraprofessionals abandoned after teachers and community members rallied against the move. Parents expressed concern that their children will suffer as a result.

Conclusion of Research

Only a few studies in the literature have addressed the efficacy of paraprofessionals. Blessing & Cook (1970) undertook a three-year study of the effects of teacher aides on pupil behavior in primary and intermediate education in mentally retarded classes. Analysis of the data on 17 aides in 20 classes resulted in aides having the greatest impact on primary classes and in

reducing inappropriate behavior in the classroom. Several researchers have examined the impact that trained paraprofessionals have on direct performance gains of handicapped children. Guess, et al. (1971) showed gains in language performance of severely handicapped children taught by paraprofessionals. Mitchell (1971), Frelow, et al, (1975), and Jones (1969) have demonstrated academic gains in reading with low performing children taught by paraprofessionals. The research that has been done indicated that paraprofessionals working with handicapped students have a direct effect on the students' academic performance. Jones & Bender (1993) state that authors of most of the studies have discussed efficacy only indirectly, that is, in terms of teachers' satisfaction with the performance of the paraprofessionals, rather than in terms of measurable improvement in student outcomes in special education classes. Generalization and transferring skills and behaviors from the special education classroom to the mainstream environment with paraprofessional support has not been addressed at all in the literature. Although some efficacy data exist, much more is needed.

Finally, a fact consistently reported by the literature is that few states are attending to systematic training or certification of paraprofessionals. Few colleges or universities teach preservice teachers how to utilize a paraprofessional in the classroom. Little attention has been given to the utilization of paraprofessionals in special education programs. Empirical

research (Jones & Bender, 1993) is needed to include, but not be limited to, improvement of student outcomes, job description and status of paraprofessionals, training programs, efficient utilization, the effects of the REI, and the effects of the inclusion movement as it pertains to the roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessional.

Planned Solution Strategy

Pickett (1986a, 1986b) and Case (1986) reported that a training process must be developed to match the overall goal of the specific special education process. This project identified the needs of the special education paraprofessionals and developed the training program to address those felt needs. Reid & Reid (1974) state that training periods may vary in length. This 12-week in-service program was designed to meet weekly after school hours for a total of 24 contact hours. Attendance was voluntary, and compensation was figured on an hourly basis. Further, the collaborative nature of the designed program empowered paraprofessionals to participate in a project that directly related to their daily employment and interest.

Frank, Keith & Steil (1988), Pickett (1986), Reid & Reid (1974), Frith & Lindsey (1982), and Frith and Mims (1985) support pre-service, in-service, and continued training of paraprofessionals due to the ever-changing roles and responsibilities in the delivery of education to students with handicaps.

Education support personnel associations across the nation are becoming more active in staff development planning. It was the intent of this writer to motivate paraprofessionals to take a proactive approach in managing their own professional development through seeking courses, workshops, and training that relate to their jobs and areas of interest.

CHAPTER III.

Method

The paraprofessionals benefitted from formal training in basic classroom skills. Listed below are the materials utilized in conducting the 12-week cooperative educational training project.

A set of blackline masters

Handouts of various topics, handicapping conditions descriptions, and references or resources

Copy of federal and Maine state special education regulations, PL94-142, PL101-476

Copy of blank individual education plan (IEP)

Current research/literature

Videos explaining varying exceptionalities

Books, tapes, and community resources

Weekly feedback sheets for paraprofessional comments on services

Inventory of teachers' classroom needs and paraprofessional skills and interests

Certificate of participation

VCR

overhead projector

chart paper

This program was intended for paraprofessionals who worked in regular and special education classrooms and special education teachers who worked with them.

Work Session 1: Handout Packet

In Work Session 1, the teacher gave to each paraprofessional attending the session a packet containing a timeline agenda, initial surveys, and a copy of federal and state special education guidelines. The teacher discussed confidentiality under The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and defined the responsibilities of a paraprofessional as detailed in special education law PL94-142. Additional pertinent information was provided from IDEA, PL101-476, the individualized education plan article(s) on special education law and IEP.

Work Session 2: Discuss the Teacher/paraprofessional Relationship and Role

During Work Session 2, the teacher built teams through role playing. The teacher also explained the paraprofessional's job responsibilities and the amount of supervision the paraprofessional should receive. The concept of matching needs and skills (including the teacher's role, and the

paraprofessional's role) was examined, and the shared responsibilities were discussed. The teacher provided various pertinent articles and handouts for each participant.

Work Session 3: Discuss Communication with Parents/guardians

In the third work session, the teacher impressed upon the paraprofessionals the importance of being knowledgeable of the rights of parent(s)/guardians and being sensitive to parental reactions and feelings, especially as they relate to cultural/language differences in the educational process. The teacher also provided role modeling activities, highlighting the paraprofessional's role in communicating with parent(s)/guardians in a positive, non-threatening manner. The teacher provided resources for parents and presented ideas for parent bulletin boards.

Work Session 4: Discuss the Working Relationship

During Work Session 4, the teacher discussed the roles and responsibilities of each individual involved in the program, including how to improve communication, what local requirements are, and required procedures and duties of the paraprofessional. The teacher presented ideas on how to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with supervisory personnel, support staff, members of the community, and related service

personnel. The teacher also explained the appropriate channels of communication/authority, including the appropriate times to communicate with supervisor/teacher, respond to and initiate communication with supervisory, support, community, and related service personnel within a framework of paraprofessionals in a positive manner. The teacher also explained how the paraprofessional needs to understand responsibilities in relation to related services such as speech-language pathologists, physical and occupational therapists, and behavioral counselors.

Work Session 5: Understanding Children

Work Session 5 highlighted methods of helping the paraprofessional understand children through studying handouts and books on developmental characteristics of children five years to nine years old. The paraprofessional was instructed in how to assist a teacher in maintaining a safe environment by recognizing unsafe conditions in the structural buildings/rooms, furnishings, materials, equipment, weather, and landscaping, and being aware of unsafe actions and activities. The teacher pointed out how and when the paraprofessional should remove, change, and/or report unsafe conditions, and how to redirect activity to provide for a safer atmosphere. Also addressed were methods for adapting the environment for different types of handicaps.

Work Session 6: Understanding Children, continued

In Work Session 6, the teacher continued instruction in understanding children through handouts and articles that provide information about the characteristics of exceptional children, children with mild mental retardation, or educable mentally retarded (EMR) children, children with learning disabilities (LD), children who are emotionally disturbed, or behavior disordered (ED or BD Children), children with speech and language impairment, visual impairment, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, deaf/blind impairment, multihandicapped, autistic, traumatic brain injury. The teacher showed the video *Fat City* that provided insight into LD children.

Work Session 7: Discuss Instructional Methods

Work Session 7 consisted of identifying instructional methods through use of pertinent materials, student grouping, appropriate physical setting, classroom teachers' expectations, modifications of curriculum, behavior management, interpersonal relationships among students and their peers. These concepts were illustrated through role playing, handouts, and articles.

Work Session 8: Caution About Labeling Children

In Work Session 8, the teacher explained the danger in "labeling" children with handicaps, and pointed out that each child is a unique individual. The teacher also impressed upon the paraprofessionals that there are varying degrees of handicaps, and that children who have mild handicaps do not become "normal," but learn to compensate. In this session, the teacher also revisited the individualized education plan (IEP) and provided samples of IEPs. The teacher detailed the components of the Plan and stressed that the IEP is a legal document. Appropriate articles and handouts were provided, and the video *Educating Peter*, which focuses on Downs Syndrome, was shown.

Work Session 9: Classroom Instruction and Materials

In Work Session 9, the teacher described how the paraprofessional should assist the teacher in daily observation and child instruction. The teacher explained how the paraprofessional should recognize normal development and the possible effects of various handicapping conditions in the major skill areas of self-help, gross and fine motor skills, language, socio-emotional, and cognitive development. The teacher instructed the paraprofessionals on how to observe, report, and/or record child behavior in a systematic manner. The teacher explained how to report the behavior and performance of students relative to needs and skill acquisition. The

paraprofessional was instructed in how to assist in the completion of various informal assessments when requested by the teacher. The teacher also explained how to develop positive communication and good listening skills with students, and the importance of sharing information with teacher. These issues were addressed through the use of discussion, handouts, and role playing.

Work Session 10: Instructional Support

Work Session 10 consisted of instruction in how the paraprofessional should assist in planning and preparing for individual or group lessons and activities in academic areas, how to recognize and initiate modifications of instructional materials or activities as necessary, and how to assist the teacher in reinforcing students' skills. The teacher advised the paraprofessional to be aware of the teacher's goals and expectations for each student he or she will be working with, and to understand that not every method works with every student. The paraprofessional was instructed in different approaches that are often required for student success, and how to help students work on special projects or assignments. The teacher instructed the paraprofessionals on how to assist physically challenged students in self-help skills such as daily feeding and toileting.

The paraprofessionals were instructed in how to recognize appropriate techniques/materials and how to implement activities for language stimulation and development. Additional instruction focused on recognizing strategies/materials and implementing activities for gross, fine, and sensory motor development, including outside as well as inside activities.

Work Session 11: Behavior Management

Work Session 11 focused on the paraprofessional's role in organizing the classroom to facilitate successful behavior management, and preparing the students' individual behavior plans. How to establish a positive rapport and non-threatening manner with students was also addressed, including how to recognize individual characteristics and needs, and the rights of each student, along with cultural differences. The paraprofessional was instructed in the significance of maintaining a calm neutral tone of voice when working with a behavioral disordered student. The teacher explained that it is important for the paraprofessional to implement the same strategies as the teacher, to be consistent with each student, and to follow through with rewards or consequences as appropriate. The teacher stressed the importance of ignoring negative behavior and praising/rewarding positive behavior through positive and/or negative reinforcement. The concept of effectively using time-out was presented, and the teacher provided details of the token economy reward

system. The teacher also encouraged the paraprofessional to ask for help and/or communicate when the behavior plan from the supervisory teacher is unclear. The paraprofessional was instructed to record behaviors and chart for frequency and duration.

The teacher advised the paraprofessionals that they will be expected to participate in parent conferences when requested to. The paraprofessionals were also encouraged to exhibit a positive attitude in order to improve a student's self-esteem, show acceptance of each student, and give students confidence in their abilities to accomplish assigned tasks. Instruction was provided on how to achieve improved behavior through allowing the student to make choices, and through complimenting them, encouraging them, and praising their efforts. The paraprofessional was cautioned to know their limits with an "acting out" student and to request help from the supervising teacher when necessary. They were advised that it is critical to recognize/watch for signs, and report any perceived evidence, of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse and/or neglect to their supervisors. The videos *Jumping Johnny Get to Work* and *Inclusion* were be provided for illustration, along with appropriate articles and handouts.

Work Session 12: Conclusion

The conclusion of the training occurred in Work Session 12. The article *Paraprofessionals, How to Reduce Stress and Burnout* was distributed and discussed. Techniques on reducing stress were shared, and role playing was used to illustrate these concepts. The teacher provided information on the Maine Support Network for Rural Special Educators membership. At the conclusion of the session, each participant was awarded a certificate of participation (Appendix J, p. 69). Each participant was asked to complete a posttest (Appendix E, p. 57) and an evaluation of the training project (Appendix I, p. 67). Participants returned all borrowed materials, and the teacher solicited from participants input for use in mapping interests for next year's 1995-96 training sessions.

CHAPTER IV.

Results

Each paraprofessional in this project completed a pre and post self-evaluation instrument. The pre and post evaluations were designed to allow the paraprofessional to assess her own knowledge, working relationships, and job performance skills. The and pre- and post-evaluations included 25 questions rated by a scale ranging from 0% to 100%. The individual estimated her level of ability before and after the training.

The supervising teacher and director of special services collectively rated each paraprofessional by completing a pre and post evaluation. The pre and post evaluations included 25 questions rated by a scale ranging from 80% to 40% and below, with 80% being the preferred level of proficiency needed to successfully conduct the required tasks of special education paraprofessionals.

A post self-evaluation instrument was administered to the target group at the completion of the 12-week cooperative training project. Results of the post-assessment (Appendix F, p. 58) indicated that five members of the target group estimated their increased level of learned skills and knowledge to be a median score of 100%. Seven members estimated their increased level of skills to be a median score of 80%. This increased learned knowledge, skills,

and working relationships resulted in an overall improvement of 20% to 80%, meeting the desired proficiency level necessary to successfully fulfill the requirements of a paraprofessional in special/regular education classrooms.

Further analysis of post-assessment data (Appendix G, p. 62) revealed that members of the target group increased their knowledge by 40% in the areas of Behavior, Understanding Students with Handicaps, and Special Education Laws. The Needs Analysis and Pre-assessments showed these areas to be the ones in which the targeted group appeared to be most deficient. In the areas of instruction, working relationships, and classroom organization, the pre-assessment showed that the target group appeared to be more comfortable, however, there was still a 20% to 40% estimated level of increase, again meeting the desired proficiency level of 80% or above.

In addition to self-evaluation, the target group showed improvement by 80% or more in their levels of knowledge and skills on post-assessment ratings conducted by supervisory teachers/director (Appendix H, p. 64). It was found that the target group increased their level of skills and/or knowledge by a range of 40% to 80% as shown in (Appendix H, p. 64). Areas of most concern—Behavior, Understanding Students with Handicaps, and Special Education Law—the members of the target group improved by 40% as shown on (Appendix H, p. 64). Also improvement by 20% to 40% was seen in the areas of Instruction, Working Relationships, and Classroom Organization.

Further, the members of the target group collectively rated the entire training project as positive, informative, and adequate in meeting their needs (Appendix I, p. 67). They requested that the training begin in October 1995, feeling that early on going in-service is beneficial in keeping the group more in touch with each other. Answers to questions are delivered more quickly and thoroughly, and that they enjoyed the support given at the sessions.

Two significant practices evolved from the weekly training discussions. First, substitute paraprofessionals were requested by the supervising teachers to shadow employed paraprofessionals on an hourly rotation basis for two days. Shadowing employed paraprofessionals has been successful due to the enthusiasm and motivation that all 12 paraprofessionals displayed in sharing and teaching each other their daily job performance skills and routines. Hands-on training and peer tutoring have given the paraprofessionals a sense of ownership of their daily activities. Second, all six employed paraprofessionals willingly began to discuss, and then implement, rotating positions on a weekly basis. Once scheduling demands were worked out, these rotations became fixed. For example, initially, Paraprofessional #1 was the exclusive paraprofessional for a medically fragile child every day, all day, and Paraprofessional #2 was the paraprofessional for an autistic student all day, every day. The supervising teachers, together with the regular education teachers and Paraprofessionals #1 and #2, worked out a schedule in which

Paraprofessionals #1 and #2 switched students one-half of the day, five days a week. This arrangement was so successful that it was implemented permanently. Its success was due to a number of factors, including the following: first, rotating provided diversity to both the student and the paraprofessional; second, the paraprofessionals showed reduced stress and burnout; and third, the advantage of having more than one paraprofessional familiar with more than one student, adapting to differing classroom environments, and providing varied job performance skills proved to be of great value to the programs. The utilization of paraprofessionals became more effective, especially during the times when one or the other was absent from school. Rotation scheduling with all paraprofessionals, including those that substitute, has become standard practice and is working very well. Now the 12 paraprofessionals are able to work with any student in any classroom and feel confident that they possess the necessary job skills and can perform effectively in each situation.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

Plans made by the administrative district to continue paraprofessional training are supported. This project was limited to 12 paraprofessionals who worked directly with K-3 students, addressing the needs of that age group. Administrators would like to include K-12 paraprofessionals in a district-wide project which consists of three towns and possibly over 40 paraprofessionals, including those currently employed and those interested in substituting. Dissemination of this project will be shared with the workshops held by the Maine Support Network for Rural Special Educators, both on the county and state levels, as this writer is on the advisory team representing the county.

Findings will be shared with the local school board at the June 1995 meeting to request continued financial support for pre-service and in-service paraprofessional training. It is this writer's intention to have this project, if accepted, published in the ERIC database.

It will be recommended that the support staff development budget for paraprofessional training covering the 1995-96 budget year include line item expenditures for the following:

- training and development of staff to teach the program,

- developing curriculum,
- utilizing computerized technology,
- funding visits to similar county schools to network practices,
- and hourly compensation for paraprofessionals attending training.

In-service professional staff development conducted in the fall of 1995 will include on the agenda recommendations for effectively utilizing paraprofessionals in the mainstreamed classrooms. The following items will be addressed:

- a systematic approach to developing paraprofessional job descriptions,
- placement based upon balancing teachers' needs and regular classroom program plans,
- supervision and direction of the paraprofessional,
- determining parallels and differences between staff needs and paraprofessionals' skills,
- the identification of areas in which paraprofessionals may require further training in order to work more effectively in a given program or with a particular teacher.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Maine Department of Education special Education Regulations

Appendix A: Maine Department of Education Special Education Regulations
Pages 17, 18, 19

5.3 Consultation Services

Consultation services may be provided to regular education teachers to assist them in modifying and/or adapting their regular education curriculum to serve students with disabilities. Consultation services shall be provided by a certified special education consultant or a certified special education teacher employed by the unit.

When consultation services are provided to assist a regular education teacher with a student with a disability, such consultation services shall be included in the student's Individualized Education Program and the student shall be counted as part of the special education teacher's student-teacher ratio.

5.4 Resource Services

A. Definition - Resource services are special education services in which students with disabilities receive less than half of their academic and/or behavioral instruction from an appropriately certified special education teacher.

B. Teacher qualifications - The teacher responsible for resource services shall be certified as required by Chapter 115 as amended (Certification Endorsements for Teachers).

C. Student-teacher ratio - The ratio of students to each full-time equivalent certified special education teacher providing resource services shall not exceed a total of 15 to 1, with no more than 8 being served at any one time.

During the time that auxiliary personnel work under the supervision of the certified special education teacher providing the resource services, thirteen (13) students may be served, but the total caseload ratio shall not change (see Section 5.9).

D. Comparable Facilities - Resource services shall be provided to students with disabilities in facilities with accommodations comparable to those in which regular education is provided to regular education students.

5.5 Composite Services

A. Definition - Composite services are a combination of resource and self-contained services when the school unit does not have sufficient numbers of students to provide both services. Composite services shall be located in chronologically age appropriate settings. Composite services shall not replace self-contained services when there are sufficient students to operate such services.

B. Teacher Qualifications - The teacher responsible for composite services shall be certified as required by Chapter 115.

C. Student-teacher ratio - The ratio of students to each full-time equivalent certified special education teacher providing composite services shall not exceed 15-1, with no more than 6 to 1 being served at any one time. During

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Appendix A: Maine Department of Education Special Education Regulations
Pages 17, 18, 19 (continued)

the time that auxiliary personnel work under the supervision of the certified special education teacher providing composite services, eleven (11) students may be served (see Section 5.9).

D. Comparable Facilities - Composite services shall be provided to students with disabilities in facilities with accommodations comparable to those in which regular education is provided to regular education students.

5.6 Self-contained Services

A. Definition - Self-contained services are special education services in which students with disabilities receive a majority (50 percent or more) of their academic and behavioral instruction from an appropriately certified special education teacher.

Self-contained services shall be located in chronologically age appropriate settings; shall be limited to serving students within a five-year chronological age span; and shall be designed to serve students with mild to moderate, moderate to severe, or severe to profound impairments.

B. Teacher Qualifications - The teacher responsible for self-contained services shall be certified as required by Chapter 115.

C. Student-teacher Ratio - The following student-teacher ratios shall not be exceeded for self-contained services. The figures in parentheses represent the number of additional students who may be provided self-contained services during the time that one or more educational technicians work under the supervision of the certified special education teacher responsible for the program. (see Section 5.9).

Ages 5-9	6:1	(5)
Ages 10-14	8:1	(5)
Ages 15-20	10:1	(5)

NOTE: Classes for students with a severe to profound degree of impairment shall be staffed with a minimum of two (2) providers (i.e., one teacher and one teacher aide) at all times to ensure the safety and well being of the students.

D. Comparable Facilities - Self-contained services shall be provided to students with disabilities in facilities with accommodations comparable to those in which regular education is provided to regular education students.

5.7 Regional Services

If fewer than 10 students enrolled in a public school require resource services, or fewer than five students enrolled in a public school require self-contained services, the resource or self-contained services may be provided:

A. By another school within the administrative unit;

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Appendix A: Maine Department of Education Special Education Regulations
Pages 17, 18, 19 (continued)

B. Through a tuition or cooperative agreement with another administrative unit or private school; or

C. By an approved special purpose day school.

If more than 10 students within a 5-year chronological age span are placed for resource services from a public school to another public or private school, the sending unit shall submit to the Commissioner a plan to initiate resource services within the sending school by the next school year.

If more than five students within a 5-year chronological age span are placed for self-contained services from a public school to another public or private school, the sending unit shall submit to the Commissioner a plan to initiate self-contained services within the sending school by the next school year.

Regional services shall be provided to students with disabilities in facilities with accommodations comparable to those in which regular education is provided to regular education students.

5.8 Qualified Staff

Any special education services provided to a student with a disability shall be considered as a part of the student's special education program, shall be specified in the student's IEP and shall be provided by an appropriately certified special education teacher. An Educational Technician approved by the Division of Teacher Certification and Placement of the Department may provide special education services when supervised by the certified special education teacher responsible for the program.

5.9 Supervision of Educational Technicians

An Educational Technician I, II, or III may not work with more than five students at any one time.

Educational Technicians I, II, and III shall be supervised by a certified special education teacher when providing special education services to students with disabilities and supervised by the classroom teacher or appropriate content specialist when assisting a student with a disability during integrated activities. Such supervision shall be as required by Chapter 115 of the regulations of the Division of Certification.

5.10 Tutorial Services

Tutorial services shall be offered to any student with a disability who is unable to participate in an administrative unit's regular or special education classes and to any student with a disability who has been suspended or expelled from school.

Any tutorial services offered to a student with a disability shall be provided by an appropriately certified special education teacher, or by a certified regular education teacher, or by a substitute teacher for that administrative

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Appendix B: Needs Assessment for Paraprofessionals

Appendix B: Needs Assessment for Paraprofessionals

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS	
NAME DATE NUMBER	
CHECK THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS YOU BELIEVE ARE NECESSARY FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS	
BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SUPPORT	
	1. Reinforce appropriate behavior following teacher's plan.
	2. Observe, report, and/or record child behavior in a systematic manner.
	3. Help build students' positive self-esteem and attitudes.
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	
	4. Modify written materials.
	5. Supervise independent or small group work.
	6. Recognize techniques/materials and implement activities for language stimulation and development.
	7. Reinforce concepts presented by the teacher in reading, math, spelling, and vocabulary.
	8. Report behavior and performance of children relative to needs and skill acquisition.
	9. Develop positive communication and good listening skills with students.
	10. Assist physically and/or nonverbal students.
WORKING RELATIONSHIPS	
	11. Recognize appropriate channels of communication and authority.
	12. Establish positive rapport and non-threatening manner with students, classroom teacher, special education staff, and administrators.
	13. Contribute a positive attitude to improve a student's self-esteem.
	14. Accept direction in changing daily roles and responsibilities.
	15. Initiate positive communication with supervisory personnel classroom teachers.
UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS WITH HANDICAPS	
	16. Assist in maintaining a safe environment by recognizing unsafe conditions in the building, furnishings, materials, equipment, weather, and landscaping.
	17. Recognize normal development including the possible effects of various handicapping conditions in the major skill areas of self help, gross and fine motor skills, language, socio-emotional, and cognitive development.
	18. Recognize the laws PL 94-142 and PL 101-476 idea and their mandates.
	19. Observe the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) with respect to educational records confidentiality.
	20. Assist in the restructuring process during the move toward inclusion.
CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION	
	21. Assist in the organization of the room environment.
	22. Locate instructional materials.
	23. Develop and manage learning centers.
	24. Duplicate materials, make instructional games.
	25. Assist in daily planning.

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Appendix C: Summary of Needs Assessment

Appendix C: Summary of Needs Assessment

SUMMARY OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT														
ITEM	PARAPROFESSIONAL												TOTAL	%
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12	100
2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12	100
3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12	100
4		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10	83
5	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12	100
6	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		11	92
7	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		10	83
8	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12	100
9	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	11	92
10	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12	100
11	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	10	83
12	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	11	92
13	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	11	92
14	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	10	83
15	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	10	83
16	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	11	92
17	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12	100
18	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12	100
19	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	12	100
20	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	11	92
21	x					x	x	x	x	x	x		7	58
22	x	x		x	x	x	x		x		x		8	67
23	x	x	x			x	x	x		x	x		9	74
24	x		x	x			x	x			x		6	50
25	x			x			x	x	x		x	x	7	58

Appendix D: Pretest for Paraprofessionals

PRETEST FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS								
NAME							DATE	
PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS RELATIVE TO THE FOLLOWING:								
NO.	KNOWLEDGE/SKILL	SKILL LEVEL						
		100%	80%	60%	40%	20%	10%	0
1.	Reinforce appropriate behavior following teacher's plan.							
2.	Observe, report, and/or record child behavior in a systematic manner.							
3.	Help build students' positive self-esteem and attitude.							
4.	Modify written materials.							
5.	Supervise independent or small group work.							
6.	Recognize techniques/materials and implement activities for language stimulation and development							
7.	Reinforce concepts presented by the teacher in reading, math, spelling, and vocabulary.							
8.	Report behavior and performance of children relative to needs and skill acquisition.							
10.	Assist physically and/or nonverbal students							
11.	Recognize appropriate channels of communication and authority.							
12.	Establish positive rapport and non-threatening manner with students, classroom teacher, special education staff, and administrators							
13.	Contribute a positive attitude to improve a student's self-esteem.							
14.	Accept direction in changing daily roles and responsibilities.							
15.	Initiate positive communication with supervisory and classroom teachers.							
16.	Assist in maintaining a safe environment by recognizing unsafe conditions in the building, furnishings, materials, equipment, weather, and landscaping.							
17.	Recognize normal development including the possible effects of various handicapping conditions in the major skill areas of self help, gross and fine motor skills, language, socio-emotional, and cognitive development.							
18.	Recognize the laws PL 94-142 and PL 101-476 idea and their mandates.							
19.	Observe the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) with respect to educational records confidentiality.							
20.	Assist in the restructuring process during the move toward inclusion.							
21	Assist in the organization of the room environment							
22.	Locate instructional materials							
23.	Develop and manage learning centers							
24.	Duplicate materials, make instructional games.							
25	Assist in daily planning							

Appendix E: Posttest for Paraprofessionals

POSTTEST FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS									
NAME								DATE	
PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS RELATIVE TO THE FOLLOWING:									
NO.	KNOWLEDGE/SKILL	SKILL LEVEL							
		100%	80%	60%	40%	20%	10%	0	
1.	Reinforce appropriate behavior following teacher's plan.								
2.	Observe, report, and/or record child behavior in a systematic manner.								
3.	Help build students' positive self-esteem and attitude.								
4.	Modify written materials.								
5.	Supervise independent or small group work.								
6.	Recognize techniques/materials and implement activities for language stimulation and development								
7.	Reinforce concepts presented by the teacher in reading, math, spelling, and vocabulary.								
8.	Report behavior and performance of children relative to needs and skill acquisition.								
10.	Assist physically and/or nonverbal students								
11.	Recognize appropriate channels of communication and authority.								
12.	Establish positive rapport and non-threatening manner with students, classroom teacher, special education staff, and administrators								
13.	Contribute a positive attitude to improve a student's self-esteem.								
14.	Accept direction in changing daily roles and responsibilities.								
15.	Initiate positive communication with supervisory and classroom teachers.								
16.	Assist in maintaining a safe environment by recognizing unsafe conditions in the building, furnishings, materials, equipment, weather, and landscaping.								
17.	Recognize normal development including the possible effects of various handicapping conditions in the major skill areas of self help, gross and fine motor skills, language, socio-emotional, and cognitive development.								
18.	Recognize the laws PL 94-142 and PL 101-476 idea and their mandates.								
19.	Observe the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) with respect to educational records confidentiality.								
20.	Assist in the restructuring process during the move toward inclusion.								
21	Assist in the organization of the room environment								
22.	Locate instructional materials								
23.	Develop and manage learning centers								
24.	Duplicate materials, make instructional games.								
25	Assist in daily planning								

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Appendix F: Results of Pretest for Paraprofessionals

Appendix F

Results of Pre-Assessment for Paraprofessionals

RESULTS OF PRE-ASSESSMENT FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS																											
P	BEHAVIOR			INSTRUCTIONAL							WORKING RELATIONSHIPS					UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY LAWS AND STUDENTS WITH HANDICAPS					CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION					TOTAL	M
1	60	60	80	40	60	40	60	60	80	40	80	80	80	60	40	20	20	20	20	60	60	40	40	60	60	1340	60
2	40	40	40	60	60	60	60	40	60	40	40	60	60	60	60	40	40	40	20	20	40	40	40	40	40	1140	40
3	40	40	60	60	80	80	80	60	60	60	60	80	80	60	80	60	60	40	40	40	60	60	60	60	60	1520	60
4	20	20	20	40	40	40	40	40	60	60	40	40	60	60	60	40	40	20	20	40	60	60	60	40	60	1080	40
5	20	20	20	40	60	40	60	40	60	20	60	60	60	60	60	40	20	0	0	0	60	40	40	40	60	980	40
6	40	40	40	60	60	60	60	40	80	80	20	80	80	80	80	60	60	40	20	20	80	80	80	80	80	1500	60
7	20	20	20	40	40	40	40	40	40	0	60	60	60	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	20	0	60	20	660	20
8	60	60	60	60	40	40	60	60	60	60	60	80	80	80	80	80	60	40	40	40	80	80	80	80	80	1600	60
9	40	40	40	60	60	60	40	40	60	40	80	60	60	60	60	60	60	40	40	40	60	60	60	60	60	1340	60
10	80	80	80	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	80	80	80	80	80	60	60	60	40	40	40	80	80	80	80	1680	60
11	0	0	0	60	60	40	60	60	60	0	60	60	60	60	60	20	0	0	0	0	60	40	0	60	60	860	40
12	0	0	60	0	0	20	20	20	60	0	60	60	60	40	20	20	0	0	0	0	0	60	40	20	60	620	20

P = Paraprofessional

Appendix F

Results of Post-Assessment for Paraprofessionals

Results of Pre-Assessment for Paraprofessionals																											
P	Behavior			Instructional							Working Relationships					Understanding Disability Laws and Students with Handicaps					Classroom Organization					Total	M
1	100	80	100	40	80	60	80	100	80	100	100	100	100	100	100	80	100	80	100	100	100	80	100	80	80	2220	100
2	80	80	80	80	80	60	60	80	80	60	60	80	80	80	80	80	60	60	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	1880	80
3	80	80	80	80	80	60	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	60	80	60	80	80	80	60	80	80	1920	80
4	100	100	100	80	80	80	100	80	100	80	100	100	100	100	80	80	100	100	80	100	80	80	80	80	100	2320	100
5	80	100	100	80	80	60	80	80	100	80	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	80	80	80	60	60	80	80	2160	80
6	100	100	100	80	80	100	100	100	100	100	80	100	100	80	100	80	100	100	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	2260	100
7	80	100	100	80	100	80	100	100	80	100	80	100	100	80	100	80	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	2360	100
8	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	100	100	80	80	80	100	80	80	80	60	80	80	80	80	100	2160	80
9	80	80	100	80	80	60	80	80	80	60	100	100	80	100	100	100	80	80	60	80	60	80	80	80	100	2160	80
10	80	80	80	80	80	60	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	60	60	60	80	80	80	80	1940	80
11	100	100	100	100	80	80	100	100	100	80	80	100	100	100	100	80	80	80	100	60	80	80	80	100	100	2240	100
12	80	80	80	80	80	60	80	80	80	80	80	100	100	60	100	80	80	80	80	60	80	60	60	100	100	2040	80

P = Paraprofessional

Appendix G: Summary of Results of Pre/Post Self-Evaluations

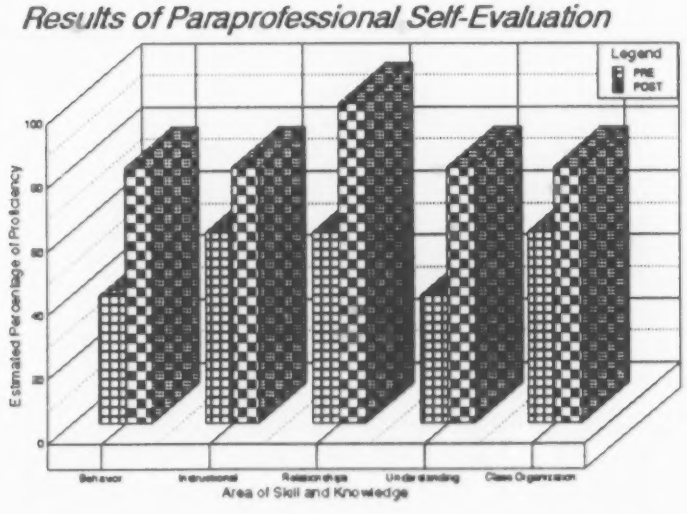
Appendix G

Summary of Results of PRE-Self-Evaluation

Area of Skill and/or Knowledge	Median Percentage
Behavior	40
Instructional	60
Working Relationships	60
Understanding Handicapped Children and Special Education Laws	40
Classroom Organization	60

Summary of Results of POST-Self-Evaluation

Area of Skill and/or Knowledge	Median Percentage
Behavior	80
Instructional	80
Working Relationships	100
Understanding Handicapped Children and Special Education Laws	80
Classroom Organization	80



Appendix H: Pre/Post Professional Evaluation of Paraprofessional

Appendix H: Pre/Post Professional Evaluation of Paraprofessional

Paraprofessional _____ Date _____

Evaluator(s) _____
_____
_____

THE PARAPROFESSIONAL . . .		80%	60%	40% & below
1.	Understands reinforcement procedures			
2.	Observes students closely enough to know how they perform in different situation			
3.	Tells students when they are performing well			
4.	Provides modification of written materials			
5.	Is able to supervise independently on small group work			
6.	Understands and implements language activities			
7.	Provides practice and drill in reading, math, spelling, and vocabulary			
8.	Is able to report behavior and performances of students relative to needs and skill acquisition			
9.	Listens to students' concerns			
10.	Imderstamds how to assist physically handicapped and/or nonverbal students			
11.	follows appropriate channels of communication and authority			
12.	Is friendly toward students and co-workers			
13.	Refrains from criticizing students			
14.	Accepts constructive criticism and suggestions in a professional manner			
15.	Seeks ways to communicate with co-workers			
16.	Offers assistance in maintaining a safe environment			
17.	Understands possible effects of various handicapping conditions in the major skill areas			
18.	Know the laws PL94-142 and PL101-476 and their madates			
19.	Observes the confidentiality laws			
20.	Provides assistance in the restructuring process toward inclusion			
21.	Participates in the organization of the room environment			
22.	Seeks instructional materials			
23.	Is able to develop and manage learning centers			
24.	Duplicates materials, makes instructional games			
25.	Participates in daily planning			

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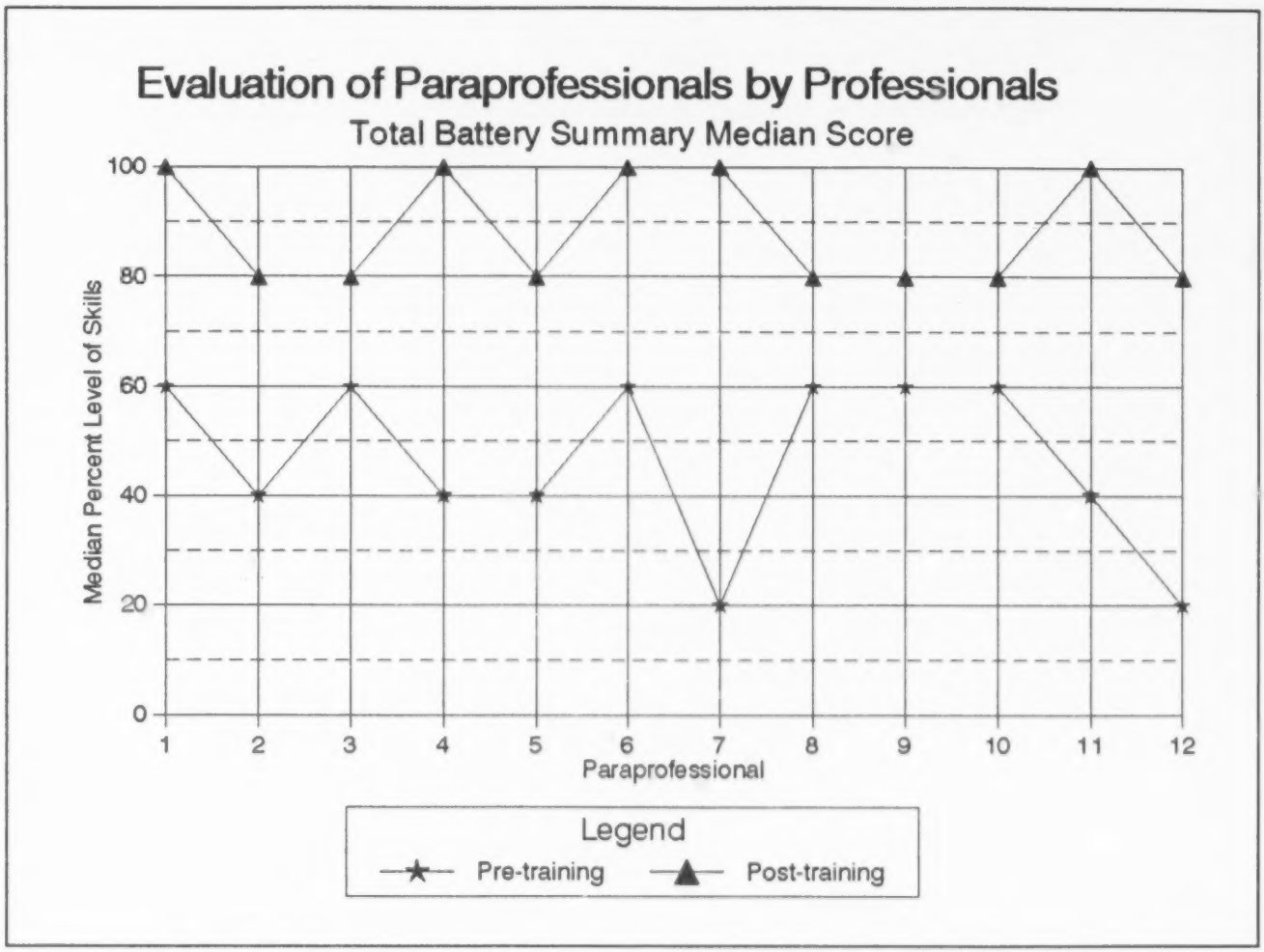
Evaluation of Paraprofessionals by Professionals
Total Battery Summary Median Score
Median Percent Level of Skills
100
80
60
40
20
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
Paraprofessional
Legend
Pre-training
Post-training

Appendix I: Paraprofessional Training Evaluation

Appendix I

Paraprofessional Training Evaluation

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. In my opinion, the work session time allotment was: (*please check one*)

   too short ☐ too long ☐ ample time ☐

2. What did you find most helpful in the training?

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. What did you find least helpful in the training?

   _____
   _____
   _____

4. What additional information and/or training would you like to have prior to employment?

   _____
   _____
   _____

5. What additional information and/or training would you like to have as an employee?

   _____
   _____
   _____

6. Please provide any comments/suggestions for further work sessions:

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

Appendix J - Paraprofessional Certificate of Participation

Certificate of Completion

Presented to:

For completing twelve weeks (24 contact hours)
of PARAPROFESSIONAL TRAINING
to increase knowledge of handicaps of special education students,
and improve job skills and working relationships among
paraprofessionals.

DEER-ISLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Deer Isle, Maine

Julie H. Davis, Special Education Trainer

Date